

Chinese language Background

The Chinese language is one of the most confusing subjects to resolve in publishing/selling on the Chinese market.

Chinese different language types

For the basis of trading in China, there are three groups of languages:

- Local language - most cities/regions have a local language. In most cases, this is not a local dialect. They are languages in their own right. While the characters are shared between the words in most cases, simplified Chinese, in the same way, we share the Latin characters between most of the European languages.

People between cities/regions will not understand each other's languages.

- Mandarin is the primary language of China. The emperors of China started the everyday use of a single Chinese language and fully implemented by Chairman Mao. "One country needs one common language."

Mandarin was used as it was already the language of government.

- Hong Kong, Taiwan, and many areas of southern Asia use traditional Chinese for their local language; e.g., Cantonese and Taiwanese. These two languages share a common written language but is spoken differently in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Cantonese is spoken in areas world where Chinese people emigrated before the 1930s, e.g., California, USA.

Most people in China speak Mandarin, often their local language and increasing numbers, English as part of their international language education at school and college. It is estimated that more than 100 million people are learning English in any given year.

There are three forms of written Chinese language, partly covered in the above:

- Traditional Chinese – The original written language of China. The handwriting of the Traditional Chinese language is an art and takes many years to perfect.
- Simplified Chinese – is the written language of China.
- Romanisation systems – There have been many ways developed for writing Chinese in Latin (European) characters. It is not practical to have a keyboard for Chinese characters. There are too many of them.

Pinyin is the standard that has been adopted by the internet. Most Chinese people under the age of 40 years use Pinyin. If you were schooled over 35 years ago, you would have been taught one of the other systems (like Pinyin).